

Governor's Water Augmentation Council

Desalination Committee

January 19, 2017 Meeting Summary

Time: 1:00pm – 3:00pm

Location: Bureau of Reclamation Office in Yuma

Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Robert Lotts called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. All participants in the meeting introduced themselves individually. The following members of the Governor's Water Augmentation Council (GWAC) were present: John Kmiec.

Yuma Brackish Groundwater Mound Study Summary and Discussion

Chuck Cullom, the Colorado River Programs Manager for the Central Arizona Project (CAP), presented on the Yuma area brackish groundwater investigations. Chuck Cullom's presentation is available on the ADWR website [here](#).

Status on Available and Needed Brackish Groundwater Models

In 2008, Montgomery & Associates, Inc, prepared a study for the Central Arizona Water Conservation District focusing on sources of brackish groundwater within the State of Arizona for augmentation purposes. Chuck Cullom was invited by Chairman Lotts to provide a brief overview of the report. Mr. Cullom presented information regarding the pros and cons associated with developing the resource in four of the areas identified in the study, as summarized below.

West Salt River Valley Alluvial Aquifer

Pros: Significant volumes of brackish groundwater have been identified, and the opportunity to solve a regional water challenge.

Cons: There are multiple jurisdictions leading to ownership challenges, and the infrastructure costs associated with brine disposal and management are high. This area is subject to regulatory hurdles within the Active Management Area, and water level decline rates have increased due to housing developments.

Coconino Aquifer in Winslow-Leupp Area

Pros: Significant volumes of brackish groundwater have been identified, and infrastructure to build a groundwater based desalination project is less expensive than building a system of pipelines from Lake Powell to Navajo Tribal land.

Cons: There is not a great deal of development or demand in the area, nor is there a clear path for brine disposal due to regulations regarding deep well injection.

Gila Bend Alluvial Aquifer

Pros: Regulatory hurdles are minimal.

Cons: Demand is low.

Willcox Playa

Pros: Seemingly lower costs for treating poor quality water than to extend Colorado River water to meet demand in Sierra Vista. There is suitable land for locating evaporation ponds.

Cons: Many regulatory challenges transporting groundwater through the San Pedro Watershed. There is not a great deal of recharge to enable sustainable withdrawals of the resource.

Committee Timeline and Next Steps

Chairman Lotts offered to meet with other members of the committee outside of the formal meeting to share thoughts and insights where to focus the efforts of the committee going forward. He also encouraged members to attend other committee meetings in order to increase the fluidity of communication between committees. Chairman Lotts recommended that the Desalination Committee engage with the Finance Committee following three additional meetings and create a project proposal for the GWAC to consider before the end of the year.

Committee Requests for Additional Resources

At this time, Chairman Lotts did not have a request for additional assistance from ADWR other than publications and supplemental information in regards to the target areas in the state for brackish water resources mentioned in the Montgomery & Associates report (2008).

Brian Payne of Arizona Municipal Water Users Association offered to share information in regards to the City of Goodyear's wetlands brine disposal pilot project for the next Desalination Committee meeting.

Schedule the Following Meeting and Closing Remarks

The next GWAC Desalination Subcommittee meeting will be held at the Arizona Department of Water Resources at 1110 W. Washington, Suite 310, Phoenix, AZ 85007. The meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 8, 2017.